

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 /097 W  
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R 091958Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6993

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

COMCARIBSEAFRON

CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 0625

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ST PINT

SUBJ: ST LUCIA ELECTIONS TAKE SHAPE

REF: BRIDGETOWN A-216 (1973)

BEGIN SUMMARY: THOUGH DATE NOT YET SET FOR ST LUCIA'S  
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, EXPECTATIONS ARE THAT THEY WILL BE  
HELD IN LATE APRIL OR EARLY MAY. NUMBER OF CONSTITUENCIES  
INCREASED FROM TEN TO SEVENTEEN, WITH AS MANY AS 39 CANDIDATES,  
INCLUDING FIVE INDEPENDENTS, EXPECTED TO RUN. OPPOSITION ST  
LUCIA LABOR PARTY (SLP), HAVING MOMENTARILY OVERCOME DIVISIONS  
CAUSED BY IDEOLOGICAL AND LEADERSHIP SQUABBLES, HAS MOUNTED  
IMPRESSIVE LIST OF TALENTED CANDIDATES AND HAS BEEN WAGING  
VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN FOR MORE THAN TWO MONTHS IN ANTICIPATION  
OF POSSIBLE SNAP ELECTION. RULING UNITED LABOR PARTY (UWP),  
WHICH HAS YET TO BEGIN CAMPAIGNING IN EARNEST, WILL BE RUNNING  
WITH TRIED AND TRUE, IF SOMEWHAT TIRED, STALWARTS. NEVERTHELESS,  
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UWP'S IMPRESSIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ABILITY TO EXPLOIT

POPULAR FEARS ABOUT RADICALISM OF SOME OPPOSITION CANDIDATES  
WILL WORK TO ITS ADVANTAGE. END SUMMARY.

1. DATE OF ST LUCIA'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS REMAINS PREMIER JOHN COMPTON'S CLOSELY GUARDED SECRET, WHICH EVEN HIS OWN CABINET MINISTERS CLAIM THEY DO NOT SHARE. LATEST SPECULATION IS THAT ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD IN LATE APRIL OR EARLY MAY. AT RECENT CAMPAIGN RALLY COMPTON REPORTEDLY STATED THAT ELECTIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN CALLED MUCH EARLIER BUT FOR THE TIME REQUIRED TO COMPLETE ENUMERATION OF VOTERS. FINAL POSTING OF VOTER LISTS EXPECTED APRIL 25. MOST OBSERVERS NOW BELIEVE COMPTON WILL PREFER TO HOLD ELECTIONS BEFORE RATHER THAN AFTER NEXT CARIBBEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE, WHICH HE HOPES HOST IN ST LUCIA BEGINNING MAY 15.

2. NUMBER OF CONSTITUENCIES HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM TEN TO SEVENTEEN. REPARTIONING OF OLD ELECTORAL DISTRICTS HAS RESULTED IN CONSIDERABLE JOCKEYING AMONG CANDIDATES, AND FINAL LINEUP STILL UNCERTAIN. BELIEVED THAT AS MANY AS 39 CANDIDATES WILL RUN, INCLUDING FIVE INDEPENDENTS. RULING UWP IS RUNNING WITH STABLE OF PARTY STALWARTS AND PROVEN VOTE-GETTERS, INCLUDING FIVE OF SIX CURRENT CABINET MINISTERS, AND IS RELYING HEAVILY ON TRADITIONAL SUPPORT IN RURAL CONSTITUENCIES. UWP HAS YET TO BEGIN CAMPAIGNING IN EARNEST, THOUGH INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES REPORTEDLY WAGING EFFECTIVE DOOR-TO-DOOR CAMPAIGNS WHILE SHUNNING LARGE RALLIES.

3. OPPOSITION SLP HAS BEEN WAGING INTENSE CAMPAIGN SINCE JANUARY ANTICIPATING POSSIBLE SURPRISE ELECTION, COMBINING DAILY PUBLIC RALLIES WITH ITS OWN SMALL-GROUP, PERSONALIZED POLITICKING. PROBLEMS WHICH AROSE LAST MAY OVER MERGER OF SLP AND GEORGE ODLUM'S ST LUCIA ACTION MOVEMENT (SLAM) HAVE BEEN SUBMERGED, AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER ELECTIONS, AND SOME BELIEVE COMPTON MAY HAVE ERRED IN NOT HOLDING ELECTIONS LAST SUMMER BEFORE OPPOSITION HAD OPPORTUNITY TO REGROUP. ODLUM, ALONG WITH OTHER FORMER SLAM MEMBERS PETER JOSIE AND JOHN ODLUM, NOW RUNNING ALONGSIDE SLP LEADER KENNETH FOSTER AND OTHER SLP STALWARTS, MANY OF WHOM PREVIOUSLY OPPOSED THE SLAM-SLP MERGER. IN ADDITION, SLP'S RANKS BOLSTERED BY SUCH FIGURES AS RETIRED CHIEF JUSTICE OF WEST INDIES ASSOCIATED

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STATES HIGH COURT, ALLEN LOUISY (WHO SUCCESSFULLY MEDIATED CONFLICT BETWEEN SLAM AND SLP), FORMER UWP EDUCATION MINISTER HUNTER FRANCOIS, AND POPULAR YOUNG LAWYERS JOHN RAYNOLDS AND GREGOR MASON. FORMER TRADE UNIONIST AND 20-YEAR ASSEMBLY VETERAN MARTIN JEAN-BAPTISTE, WHOSE RECORD AS PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION LEADER HAS BEEN UNDISTINGUISHED AND AT TIMES LAUGHABLE, HAS WITHDRAWN FROM POLITICS RATHER THAN FACE OPPOSITION TO HIS CANDIDACY FROM RANKS OF HIS OWN PARTY.

4. OF INDEPENDENTS, ONLY TWO REGARDED AS SERIOUS CONTENDERS: ELDER STATESMAN GEORGE CHARLES, EX-CHIEF MINISTER AND FORMER SLP LEADER, AND YOUNG BUSINESSMAN JULIAN HUNTE, POPULAR EX-MAYOR OF CASTRIES. HUNTE, WHO RESIGNED FROM UWP AND SUBSEQUENTLY JOINED AND QUIT SLAM, IS RUNNING AS "SLP INDEPENDENT," LABEL HE HOPES WILL DRAW SUPPORT FROM BOTH SIDES OF POLITICAL FENCE. PRESENCE OF HUNTE AND OTHER INDEPENDENTS PROMISES TO COMPLICATE CHANCES OF PARTY CANDIDATES.

5. DESPITE SLP'S EARLY LEAD IN CAMPAIGNING, UWP IS STILL FAVORED TO RETAIN CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT. THOUGH COMPTON AND HIS CABINET WOULD NOT BE FAVORED IN A POPULARITY CONTEST, UWP CAN POINT WITH SOME PRIDE TO IMPRESSIVE RECORD OF ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENT. UWP ALSO EXPLOITING RATHER SUCCESSFULLY RADICAL REPUTATIONS OF SOME OPPOSITION CANDIDATES, PARTICULARLY ODLUM AND JOSIE, AND POPULAR FEARS THAT CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT WOULD MAKE POTENTIAL INVESTORS UNEASY AND THREATEN ST LUCIA'S HOPES FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY. MOREOVER, SLP VICTORY WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY PRECIPITATE INTRA-PARTY LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE AMONG ODLUM, JOSIE, FOSTER AND JUDGE LOUISY OVER WHO WOULD OCCUPY CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MANSION, WHICH IN EYES OF MANY VOTERS COULD ALSO PROVE DISASTROUS FOR ST LUCIA'S FORTUNES. DONOVAN

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